1. Evans-Pritchard E-S (1931, 1936) 1940
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

571 may be supposed to lead to a small range of relationship-forms with a high degree of solidarity in the smaller local and kinship groups and we may expect to find a simple social structure.

181 Some outstanding traits in Nuer character may be said to be consistent with their low technology and scanty food-supply. I again emphasise the crudity and discomfort of their lives. All who have lived with Nuer would, I believe, agree that though they are very poor in goods they are very proud in spirit. Schooled in hardship and hunger—for both they express contempt—they accept the direst calamities with resignation and endure them with courage. Content with few goods they despise all that lies outside them; their derisive pride amazes a stranger. Reliant on one another they are loyal and generous to their kinsmen. One might even to some extent attribute their pronounced individualism to resistance to the persistent claims of kinsmen and neighbours against which they have no protection but stubbornness. The qualities which have been mentioned, courage, generosity, patience, pride, loyalty, stubbornness, and independence, are the virtues the Nuer themselves extol, and these values can be shown to be very appropriate to their simple mode of life and to the simple set of social relations it engenders.

XI

571 463 It is unnecessary to write more on what are generally called economics. They can be further considered in an account of kinship and family life. I will only ask the reader to bear in mind the following matters. (1) One cannot treat Nuer economic relations by themselves, for they always form part of direct social relationships of a general kind. Thus, division of labour is part of general relationships between persons of different sexes and of different ages, between spouses, between parents and children, between kinsmen of one order or another, and so forth. (2) There is some specialization, but it is occasional, and there are no occupations which can be called professions. Some women make better pots, grindstones, and baskets than others; only smiths can make certain objects; there are only a few men who understand how to make and put on the arm the tight-fitting bracelets which young men wear to show their endurance, and so on; and people who want these things either ask for them in the name of kinship or give the maker of them some millet for his services, or make him a gift on some future occasion. The man who wants the object

1: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

571 and the maker of it always belong to the same local community
463 and conduct the affair between themselves, there being no exchange of objects or services through the medium of a third person, and there is always between them a general social relationship of one kind or another, and their economic relations, if such they may be called, must conform to this general pattern of
571 behaviour. (3) There is little inequality of wealth and no class
565 privilege. A man does not acquire more objects than he can use. Were he to do so he could only dispose of them by giving them
[576] away. It is true that cattle can be amassed, but, except for a few sacred herds kept by prophets, in fact they are not. As has been explained, periodic rinderpest levels the herds and, apart from this, when a herd has reached a certain size the owner—if one may speak of an owner of a herd in which many people have rights of one kind and another—is morally bound to dispose of a portion of it by either himself marrying or by assisting a relative to do so. Cattle are sometimes loaned to persons and the owner is entitled to receive back better beasts than those he lent, e.g. a heifer for the loan of an ox; but people only lend cattle to those with whom
571 they have an established social relationship. (4) In a narrow sense
476 the simple family might be called the economic unit, but we have seen that it is not self-sufficient and the active participation of a wider group is often necessary, e.g. in building, fishing, and hunting. It is also clear that a single family cannot herd its cattle in distant pastures and, at the same time, herd the calves elsewhere, attend to the tiny calves in the kraal, milk, churn, clean the kraal, prepare dung for fuel, cook the food, and so on, by itself. Co-operation is found among neighbours who are also kinsmen. There is also much mutual assistance when co-operation is not essential to the performance of a task, e.g. in weeding and harvesting, for it is conventional to ask people for help, the obligation to assist being part of a general kinship relationship. (5) It must be recognized also that fishing, hunting, herding, and the other activities I have described are always, in a sense, collective actions, for even when there is no active co-operation the whole community passively participates in them. A single man may drive a herd to pasture, a single boy may fish in river shallows, and a single woman may cook, but they can only do these things because they belong to a community and because their actions are related in a productive system. Tradition dictates ends and means and the organization and potential strength of the community gives the co-ordination and security necessary for accomplishment. It has been remarked that seen from the outside a whole village community may be said to be consuming a common stock of food.

8:Howell E, G-5 (1942-1944)1954
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

4. TRADE AND LOANS

Trade has never been extensive among the Nuer. There is, of course, a division of labour according to sex, but there are few people who can be accounted specialist craftsmen. Individuals acquire the reputation for making certain specific objects with exceptional skill, but they rarely if ever belong to a family especially associated with such activities. This is an exceptional contrast to specialization in the spiritual sphere, for there are hereditary experts capable of dealing with almost any unusual phenomena: ritual experts, magicians, sooth-sayers and medicine-owners, who demand fees, often in cattle, for their services.

The reason lies, perhaps, in the extraordinary simplicity of Nuer material culture. Most things necessary for their migratory way of life (and this applies to all peoples who move with the seasons) can be made either from wood or grass or from the products of their cattle. Seasonal migration in any case precludes a high degree of virtuosity, for things are liable to breakage and are often an unnecessary encumbrance. Moreover the Nuer, who do not use their animals for transport, must carry everything by hand.

Certain objects were of relatively high value, and were exchanged for cattle or sheep and goats. Nowadays, however, most of these articles—hoes, spears, ornaments and the like—can be obtained for cash, and disputes do not often arise in the courts except over the sale of grain.

Trade in Cattle

Trade in cattle is clearly increasing as a cash economy becomes more important to the Nuer but, as yet, cattle are rarely sold except when the purchase of grain is necessary. A significant paragraph from the Jonglei Investigation Team's *Third Interim Report* (1948) is worth quoting, for the figures given, although taken from all Nilotic inhabitants of the Upper Nile Province, include all the Nuer:

> The disposal of surplus livestock is governed by private, family, and tribal circumstances, and is at present tied up with the need to find cash; this is required mainly for the purchase of grain and veterinary vaccines and, to a small extent, for the payment of taxes. There are four channels through which the inhabitants can dispose of their animals:
>
> (*a*) By sale to the Veterinary Laboratory at Malakal, where they will be used to produce cattle-plague vaccine and serum.
>
> (*b*) By sale to Malakal butchers for local consumption.
>
> (*c*) By export to Equatoria Province, in which case most of them will be butchered in Juba.
>
> (*d*) By export northwards to the markets of Kosti and Omdurman.
>
> In the majority of cases all trade is carried out through merchants as intermediaries. . . . Previously it had often been necessary for the District Commissioner concerned to exercise pressure before the local inhabitants could be induced to sell.

14: Huffman M-5 (no date) 1931
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

465 Many Nuer find work near the Arab settlements, or at the mission. But the work that they do at these places is different from what they have done in their tribal life. Wages for a man who works—or should work, but often does not—six hours a day range from fifty piastres to £1 per month, plus five piastres additional each week for food. This is the wage given at one mission. (The wages given are approximately equivalent to $2.50 to $5 per month, plus 25 cents. per week for food.) Wages are based upon the kind of work done. Those working for the Arabs near this same mission do not get as much. Girls who work in the Arab homes frequently get gifts of food.

Some boys receive higher wages than this for special kinds of work which they have been trained to do.

463 In one mission some boys have learned to do quite accurate work on the multigraph, others have developed into good teachers, showing remarkable ability, while a few have shown that they have talent which could be used in public speaking or preaching.

Some of the houseboys have developed into splendid cooks, being able to read a menu written in Nuer and prepare the meal desired without help. A number also can bake bread.

The District Commissioners use interpreters who can write, and are finding more use for boys who have had some school training.

501 Occasionally some Nuer fell a tree, cutting the trunk to the length required for a canoe. Then they will hollow it out and make a canoe of it.

000 All this goes to prove that the Nuer has latent powers which are capable of accomplishing much if rightly developed. It must be admitted that there are Nuer—or at least one—whose mind periodically turns toward